

The SWORD of the LORD

Edited by JOHN R. RICE.

"And they cried, The Sword of the Lord, and of Gideon." Judges 7:20

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THE UNPARDONABLE SIN

By Evangelist Rolfe Barnard
C/o Clayton Street Baptist Church
Montgomery, Ala.

"Verily I say unto you, all sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation: because they said, He hath an unclean spirit"—Mark 3:28-30.

In this passage and the kindred account by Matthew in his Gospel we have before us that one peculiar, distinct and terrible sin which preachers all along have called the "unpardonable" sin. It, I think, is true that the term in verse 29, "but is in danger of eternal damnation," is, as suggested in the margin of my Bible, more literally to be translated, "is bound by an eternal sin."

Perhaps all gospel preachers preach on this terrible sin. Certainly they ought to. If there is one sin for which no forgiveness is possible and if men are in danger of committing it, surely they must be warned with all earnestness and honesty by the prophets of God.

I take it that our Lord in saying in verse 28 that "all sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme," means that all sins save the one mentioned in the next verse are forgivable; that is, they will be forgiven if the conditions are met by the one sinning. He surely is seeking to emphasize the terrible-ness of the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, for in contrast to all other sins and blasphemies which may be forgiven, this sin precludes forgiveness forever. How his language "hath never forgiveness" strikes a chill in the heart of one who reads and believes as he reads.

Two things seem to be clear about this sin. First, it is a sin against the Holy Spirit. It is not against the Father or the Son, but against the Holy Spirit.

Second; it is an eternal sin. Its consequences are eternal. There is no provision made for forgiveness.

I. YOU DO NOT HAVE TO COMMIT THIS UNPARDONABLE SIN TO MISS HEAVEN AND GO TO HELL

Jesus said in John, chapter 8, "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins and whither I go ye cannot come." If a man does not repent toward God and receive forgiveness through Christ, he will go to the same Hell that the terribly hard-hearted sinner who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit goes on. Oh, my friend, if there were only one sin against which to warn you, the preacher's task would be far simpler. I do not suppose the rich man about whom Jesus spoke in Luke, chapter 16, committed the unpardonable sin; but he died and went to Hell and screamed in agony, "I am tormented in this flame." I am sure the "other" dying thief did not commit this awful sin, but he died with a curse on his lips and did not go where Jesus went with the believing thief. Likely Herod, the king of the Jews, did not commit this awful sin; but he died a horrible death and is in Hell now, wailing and gnashing.

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"Heaven Can't Wait"

By Evangelist Robert J. Wells, Th.D., Associate Editor

Text: "... now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (II Cor. 6:2).

I was reading a newspaper recently when suddenly I was startled by the words, "Heaven Can Wait". This was the title of a moving picture that was being widely advertised at the time. I said in my heart, "Oh God, what a tragedy that men should be fooled to believe that lie." The phrase was firmly fixed in my mind. I could not erase it. I felt impelled to preach a message that would present the truth and contradict that statement. How subtly the phrase, "Heaven Can Wait", expresses the smug complacency of the world!

I. THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE WORLD

The philosophy of the world is expressed in the phrase, "Heaven Can Wait." I think we will agree that most people recognize the fact of Heaven. Although there are some who deny the future existence of the soul, and say, "there is no Heaven and no Hell," and many of these same people say, "there is no God," certainly they are in the minority. The majority of people with whom we come in contact from day to day do believe in a Heaven and a Hell. They have been taught about Heaven at mother's knee in the home and in their Sunday School. They have sung about it; they have read about it in the Bible and so they recognize the fact of Heaven.

More than that—most people plan to go to Heaven. I have had the privilege of talking to many, many who do not know Christ as their Saviour and I have asked them about this matter. With hardly an exception everyone has insisted that they are planning to go to Heaven. They are willing to admit that they are not ready for Heaven now, and that they know what they must do in order to go to Heaven, and they insist they are planning to make the proper arrangements because they don't want to miss Heaven. Most of these people feel that they can decide about Heaven at their own convenience just "any time" they feel like it. They think it is not a matter of great urgency just now to settle the matter as to

whether one is going to Heaven or not, just so long as they believe there is a Heaven and are planning to go there. It does not matter to them whether they decide to make the proper arrangements today, this year, or next year. Just so long as they have it in mind, that is good enough for them. The majority of these people think it is more important to have a good time than to make provision for entering Heaven. They are so taken up with making money and with the round of pleasure that they must postpone the careful consideration of Heaven to some later time. "Heaven can wait" so far as they are concerned. Just now they must make that date. They must see this or that picture show. They must go to this frolic or that dance. There are too many places to go, too many people to see, too many things to do just now to think about Heaven. Or they say in their heart: "We'll get to that some other time when we aren't so occupied with making money. When we have plenty of leisure and feel in the mood, we'll think about Heaven."

Perhaps the greatest tragedy concerning these people is that this self-satisfaction has led them



Dr. Robert J. Wells

to believe that should something happen to them before they get around to making preparations for Heaven, God, being gracious and merciful will understand that they meant well and will let them slip into Heaven in spite of their neglect. "After all, we're not so bad, we mean well, we believe in God, we believe there is a Heaven and a Hell, and we are planning to go there; and besides that, we occasionally go to church and we give to the poor, and although we do some things that are not right, yet, for the most part, our lives are respectable and we do try to live by the Golden Rule." Yes, the phrase, "Heaven can wait" expresses the philosophy of the world so far as Heaven is concerned.

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You Cannot Hide From God

By Alfred H. Ackley

You cannot hide from God,
Though mountains cover you,
His eye our secret thoughts behold,
His presence all our lives unfold,
He knows our purposes untold,
You cannot hide from God.

Chorus:

You cannot hide from God,
You cannot hide from God,
Wherever you go,
Whatever you do,
You cannot hide from God,
His eye is fixed on you,
You cannot hide from God.

You cannot hide from God,
No matter what you do,
He meets you at life's every turn,
He knows your thoughts that blight and burn,
He weeps when His own Son you spurn,
You cannot hide from God.

You cannot hide from God,
Though quietly you go,
He notes your footsteps ere they fall,
He hears your silent heartfelt call,
His knowledge rules over high,
You cannot hide from God.

You cannot hide from God,
This one thing you can do,
If you would save your sinful soul,
If you would be made pure and whole,
If you would reach the highest goal,
Your soul must hide in God.

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With the Editor

I am now at Evansville Rescue Mission with Dr. Earnest I. Reveal, for eight days of services. Dr. Reveal founded the mission 28 years ago. This is the sixth year I have spent a week here, and more and more I thank God for the work of such real rescue missions. Actually the work here is more than that of a rescue mission. It combines rescue mission work, relief work among the poor, a summer camp for boys and girls and mothers, handles employment cases and is a center for this whole area for revival and Bible conference services, bringing the greatest preachers in America here to the large auditorium. Mr. Shufelt is here with me, having arrived last night from Oklahoma, where he has been with Dr. Hyman Appelmans in a great campaign with Baptist churches.

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WHAT IS SIN?

1. "There is no man that sinneth not"—I Kings 8:46.
2. "There is no man which sinneth not"—II Chron. 6:36.
3. "There is none good but one, that is, God"—Matt. 19:17.
4. "What then? Are we better than they? No, in no wise; for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin"—Romans 3:9.
5. "There is none righteous, no, not one"—Romans 3:10.
6. "There is none that doeth good, no, not one"—Romans 3:12; Psalm 14:3.
7. "There is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"—Romans 3:22, 23.
8. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us"—I John 1:8.

Every one of the above Scriptures are remarkable for two things. First, every one of them expressly says that all of us are sinners. The only possible exception is Jesus Christ, of course. He never sinned. He is God, and so is good. Every other man and woman in the world, Jew and Gentile, is branded alike as a sinner. Second, in every one of the above Scriptures the present tense is used. They say, not only that all have sinned; they expressly declare that all now sin, that none are now good.

Suppose we do not argue about it at all. If these Scriptures in God's Word mean what they say,

then every person in the world, saved and lost, is a sinner, is not good, does not do good. If these Scriptures mean what they say so plainly, then both the unconverted are sinners and the converted are sinners. Those whose sins are unforgiven are, of course, sinners; but those whose sins are forgiven are also sinners. All lost people and all saved people on this earth are sinners, these Scriptures definitely say. If we think some other Scripture contradicts these Scriptures, we are wrong. No Scripture ever contradicts another Scripture. All Scripture is by inspiration of God. When we

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"HEAVEN CAN'T WAIT"

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cerned. What a tragedy! A tragedy that men should accept such a philosophy and a greater tragedy that men should glorify the idea with a moving picture show, thus, creating false impressions in the minds of millions that they don't have to worry about Heaven, just "eat, drink and be merry," have a good time, and when they get ready to give Heaven consideration, it will be all right, for "Heaven can wait."

II. SOME BIBLE ILLUSTRATIONS OF THIS PHILOSOPHY.

The idea that "Heaven can wait" isn't anything new. The fact is that down through the ages of man's history, he has been characterized by a "put it off attitude" so far as Heaven and eternal life are concerned. The Bible is literally filled with illustrations of those who have lived their lives in keeping with this philosophy.

The People of Noah's Day

For instance, take the case of the people who lived in Noah's time. In Genesis 6:5, we are told "... that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." So God sent Noah to preach to the people of his day to warn them of the wrath of God and of the necessity of immediately repenting and getting right with Him. He told them of the coming judgment, urged them not to delay in the making of their preparation, but they mocked him and ridiculed the idea of the coming judgment and said:

"We have plenty of time. There isn't any need to be in a hurry."

This went on and on for one hundred twenty years and then one day God's time came and the judgment fell. Noah and his family were taken by God into the ark and the door was shut, and then the rain began to fall. It had never happened before, but it happened in accordance with God's promise, "The fountains of the deep were opened up and the waters covered the earth, and every living creature died." They did not heed the warning of God—they laughed at the idea of judgment, but it came and took them all away.

The Rich Fool

In the twelfth chapter of Luke's Gospel we read about a man of another day who felt that Heaven could wait.

"And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:

"And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?'

"And he said, 'This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.'

"And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry'" (vs. 16-19).

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Here was a man who wanted all he could get out of life. Apparently he was a man of considerable means already. He had much grounds and apparently his previous crops had been large, for his storehouses were already filled when this unusually bounteous crop was about to be harvested. After taking a trip through the fields and witnessing the abundance of his grain, he asked himself, "What will I do for I have no room where I can bestow my fruits?" And then, he said, "I know what I'll do. I'll tear down the barns I have and build greater ones and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods, and then I will say to myself, 'Now, I don't have anything to worry about. I have much goods laid up for many years. I can take it easy, eat, drink and be merry. I have worked hard over many years and now I am wealthy. Now, I will take time out to have a good time.'"

He gave no thought at all to the matter of his soul or of making preparations for Heaven; for, he felt that could wait. All that he had been interested in up until that time was making money. Now, he had made his money and he was going to spend it and have a good time. "Heaven could wait."

Another Rich Man

In the sixteenth chapter of Luke there is another rich man. In verse nineteen we read that "he was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day." In the twenty-fifth verse we read:

"In thy lifetime receivedst thy good things. . . . Here was a man, according to the Scripture, who had everything, his heart could possibly desire while on earth. He had the very finest clothes. His wardrobe was bursting with the finest linens and costly raiment of his time. He had a fine house with servants and everything he wanted to eat. He lacked no good thing so far as material things were concerned. He enjoyed the luxuries of his day. The Scripture says: 'he fared sumptuously.' No doubt, he knew better than to leave God out of his thinking, but that is exactly what he did. He was too busy making money and having a good time, and living sumptuously. Death was something a million miles away so far as he was concerned. He knew about Heaven. He knew about the preparation he had to make in order to go there, but he felt he could take his time about that. Some day after he had enjoyed life to the fullest extent, after he had drank the cup of pleasure to its dregs, after he had everything the world had to offer, then he would give consideration to that matter. Perhaps, his conscience suggested on many an occasion, 'Better not delay any longer; better settle the matter concerning Heaven, before it's too late.' But, he would say, 'Rubbish! I've plenty of time. When I get around to it, I will. 'Heaven could wait' for him, too."

A King

In the twenty-sixth chapter of Acts we read of King Agrippa, another one who felt that "Heaven could wait." He had the privilege of listening to the greatest preacher this world has ever known, saving only the Lord Jesus Christ, and that preacher gave his testimony concerning his past life of guilt and sin and then he told of the wonderful conversion and transformation affected by the new birth. He quoted from Moses and the prophets, and told how "Christ

should suffer and he should be the first who should rise from the dead and should show light until the people and to the Gentiles." It was a stirring message—a message preached in the power and demonstration of the Spirit of God. It convicted Festus and caused him to cry out with a loud voice:

"Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad" (vs. 24). Then King Agrippa said: "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." "Almost . . ." but so far as the record is concerned, he is a lost man, because to him, "Heaven could wait." He was too important. He had too much to do. He was not willing to pay the price at that time. He was almost decided, but "almost is but to fail; almost will not avail, Sad, sad, that bitter wail, Almost, but lost!"

Yes, in the days of Noah, in the days of Christ, in the days of the Apostles, men were guilty of the spirit which is expressed by the philosophy of modern times, "Heaven can wait."

III. PLAIN TEACHING OF THE BIBLE

Because this is a very serious matter, because it involves life and death, Heaven and Hell, I would like for you to give full attention as I check over again the false philosophy of the world in the light of the plain, positive statements of the Word of God. There is no excuse of not knowing what the Bible teaches concerning this. It is as clear as a bell and so simple a little child can understand it. Take, for instance, the case of the rich man in Luke 12, as he stood there saying, "I'll pull down my barns and build greater, and I'll say to my soul, 'Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry; . . .'" We read: "But God said unto him, 'Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee. Then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?'"

"So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." (Luke 12:20-21).

He thought he could get by, but God said that he was a fool. Why? Because he had left God out of his thinking; because he felt "Heaven could wait"; because he felt he could go on, make money and have a good time, "eat, drink, and be merry," and live a life of ease, when all the time he was approaching the day when his soul was to be required of him. God had given him opportunity after opportunity but repeatedly he had refused to give consideration to the most important decision necessary for any man to make, and so he became the rich fool who left his crop unharvested. His barns were never enlarged, and his impoverished soul went out to meet God without preparation. He missed Heaven because he had said in his heart: "Heaven can wait."

The Bible says that it does not pay to wait in order to make preparation for Heaven. It does not pay to "put it off" and procrastinate in this matter. How true it is that "the pathway to Hell is paved with good intentions." Most people who go to Hell and miss Heaven, never expected to go there. They did not plan to go there, but they are there! Why? Because they felt "Heaven could wait." My friend, God is honest. He is a just and righteous God and He will punish those who are not prepared for Heaven. Do not think for a moment that you can take a

chance, and then in case you are ushered into Eternity before you have made adequate preparation to die, that God will be merciful and gracious, and will let you get by in spite of your neglect. A holy, a righteous, a just and an honest God could not overlook your sin and your neglect. He would have to fulfill His Word which says: "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23).

Now, look at the rich man over in Luke 16. He was a man of wealth, of means, and influence, and "fared sumptuously every day." He had everything his heart could possibly desire, but there came a day when he died and was buried. Then the Scripture says in verse 23:

"And in Hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments. . . . What, in Hell? Yes! And, why? He missed Heaven, because he felt 'Heaven could wait.' He procrastinated in the matter of making plans to die; he had put off preparation for Heaven, no doubt, meaning to do something about it when he had more time, but one day, suddenly and unexpectedly, and long before he had planned on it, came God's appointed time for him to die. He had to leave his wealth, his fine clothes, his beautiful home and servants, and his sumptuous living. His pleasure and his business had to be suddenly dropped, and he made his exit from this world through death. Then he discovered that he had been living in a fool's paradise. His eyes were opened to the truth and he knew that the philosophy of the world was a lie. He saw his great mistake, but it was too late to do anything about it. He knew then that "Heaven can't wait," but he had waited too long to make the discovery. Oh, the tragedy, of a man who knows there is a Heaven, that there is a Hell, plans to go to Heaven and understands what preparations need to be made, but because of hesitancy, because of "putting it off," because of delay, because he feels "Heaven can wait," he suddenly awakens in the flames of Hell. Millions there must be in that infernal region who are crying out today: "If I had only known, if I had only known, I would not have waited. I would have decided for Christ when I had an opportunity! But now, it is too late, too late!" Many people feel there is no hurry about making preparations for Heaven. They feel they will live to a ripe old age and there will be plenty of time to decide. How false is this assumption! How foolish is this attitude in the light of every day experience!

Called to Meet God at Sixteen

A few weeks ago I visited one of the members of my former pastorate in Dallas, Texas, who was in St. Paul's hospital under observation. He was placed in a ward because of the crowded conditions. While visiting with him, he told me of the opportunities he had of talking to other patients about Christ. He mentioned one in particular to whom he had been of special comfort just prior to his going into the operating room. Then he pointed to another who had been there for several hours, but unconscious all the time. I looked across the ward and there I saw a young boy, just sixteen years of age on that very day, lying there with four or five people attempting to hold him down as he struggled in his unconscious condition. I inquired what the trouble was and was told that the previous day (which was Sunday) he had been riding his horse in a little town just outside of Dallas, having a good time, when suddenly the horse threw him up against the tree and his head and face were smashed, and he was im-

mediately knocked into unconsciousness. They rushed him to the hospital where he was treated for his wounds, and where they did everything they possibly could to help him, but early the following morning (on the day of his sixteenth birthday) without ever becoming conscious again, he went out into eternity to meet his God. Think of it! Only sixteen years of age, a healthy, strong, young man on a Sunday afternoon galloping along on his horse, and then two days later, he was in the presence of his God! Sudden death brought to an end all of his plans and all of his hopes. Sudden death robbed him of every future chance to make preparations for Heaven. If he was not prepared when his horse threw him against that tree, he was lost for time and eternity. Only sixteen years of age! My friend, we know not the day nor the hour when God will call us out of this world and into the next to meet Him. Are you ready?

Right here I would like to say a few words to those who feel that if they should suddenly die before having made preparation for eternity, God, because He is a gracious and a merciful God, because He is long-suffering, will overlook their mistakes and there lack of preparation and let them into Heaven nevertheless. The Bible is perfectly clear about this matter as it is about everything else.

In I. Cor. 6, verses 9 and 10 we read:

"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind.

"Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."

In Rev. 21:8, we read:

"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."

I John 2:15, 16, we read:

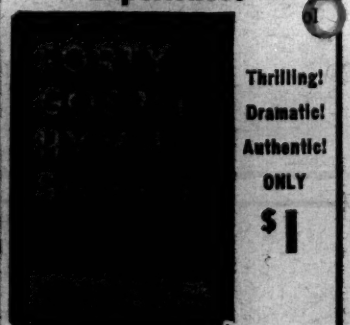
"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

"For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."

In Matt. 7:21-23, we read:

"Not every one that saith unto me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he (Continued on page three)

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"Heaven Can't Wait"

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that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

"Many will say to me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?'"

"And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

In the face of these Scriptures, these very plain passages from the Word of God, and many others like them, how can any intelligent man have the audacity to assume that one who enters eternity without adequate preparation can get by? No, my friend, the warning is clear. The declaration of God's Word is positive. Unless you have trusted Jesus as your personal Saviour, unless you have been born again, there is no hope for you. You will never see the Kingdom of God. Heaven will not be your home. Man's philosophy about Heaven is a lie that originated in Hell. There is no truth in it. Heaven cannot wait. If you are planning to go to Heaven, you had better make your arrangements now. If you expect a Home in Glory with the Saviour, you had better obey the teaching of the Scripture while you have an opportunity before it is forever too late, for "Heaven cannot wait!"

IV. MAKE YOUR PREPARATIONS FOR HEAVEN NOW!

Since Heaven can't wait, since it is necessary that we make our plans concerning Heaven now, we may expect the Word of God to give clear emphasis to this fact. That is exactly what we find as carefully read our Bible.

II Cor. 6:2—"... now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

Never in all the pages of God's Word from Genesis to Revelation do you read anything that will contradict this statement. Repeatedly, through precept and illustration, God insists that His time is now. He never suggests tomorrow, the next day, next week, or next year. He never suggests some other time. Never does He condone delay. Never! Always His time is "now," while you have the opportunity." He tells us of many who hesitated and put off the matter of preparation and who were lost because of it. He warns that we do not know what tomorrow will bring. In Proverbs 27:1, He says:

"Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."

He tells us, yea, He insists that preparation must be made without delay, for "now is the accepted time." Tomorrow may be too late. Tomorrow you may be in Eternity. Someone has said that "procrastination is the thief of time." How true that is! But it is more than that! "Procrastination is not only the thief of time. It is the thief of life, of eternal life. Many there are who have put off the matter of preparation of the soul for eternity and who have gone into eternity, unprepared, not ready to meet God, lost, doomed and damned forever.

I well remember one Thanksgiving Day experience. It was while I was pastor of a little church on the South Side of Chicago. I was visiting for Thanksgiving in the home of my wife's parents, and we were invited to stay over night. The following morning the telephone rang early and I was requested to come to the home of my Sunday School superintendent and then I was told this story:

Was He Ready?

Her husband who was in the employ of one of the railroads had to work on Thanksgiving Day. He came home late in the evening and then sat down to a delicious Thanksgiving dinner with some of his friends. He seemed to be in the very best of health, relished the food and enjoyed the fellowship with his friends. After they had gone and while he and his wife were making preparations to retire, he was stricken with an attack of indigestion. He took something to relieve the pain, but it didn't seem to do any good. The doctors were called and he received some help, but a little later the attack was renewed, and suddenly he became aware of the fact that God's time for him to die had come. He got down on his knees beside his bed and asked his wife, who was a Christian, to pray for him because he was going to die. She said: "I have prayed for you and I will pray for you, but you must ask God to save you yourself. Pray for yourself." Then suddenly, he breathed his last and went out into Eternity. I do not know for sure whether he was saved. I hope he was. I trust he accepted the advice of his wife in his heart and yielded himself to God, but I do not know. Oh, what a chance he took in putting it off. I had talked to him repeatedly about trusting Christ as his Saviour and making preparation for death, and he agreed with everything I said concerning his need and promised to give it careful consideration and said:

"I will sometime. I will sometime." Then suddenly God took him out of this world. Oh friends, there are many people who are dying like that; many people who plan to get right with God; many who agree concerning their need; many who are just waiting a little while and then suddenly, sickness comes along, or a tragic accident and they stand before God altogether unprepared.

"Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth" (Prov. 27:1).

Wendell Willke

Only a few months ago a man was travelling over this country from one end to another. He was speaking before vast throngs of people. Whenever his train stopped, great crowds gathered to hear his message. He had high hopes and ambitions. He was waging a mighty fight. He was seeking the presidential nomination from his party. Wendell Willke was making preparation to become the next president of these United States of America. You all know the story of how he finally conceded his defeat and then one day just a few months ago the newspapers blazed in their headlines the news that Wendell Willke had died. He was ill for just a short time and then a streptococcus infection brought on a heart attack, and another and another, and he went out into eternity to meet God. I do not know whether he was prepared or not, but I know he had not planned to die so soon. I know he had planned for a long time to be elected the next president of the United States. I know he dreamed of the day when he would be able to influence the masses in America and the other nations of the world in the direction of his "One World." But, time was running out for Wendell Willke, and suddenly, unexpectedly, shockingly, God reached out and brought his life to an end and he stood before his Maker.

"Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth" (Prov. 27:1).

Boake Carter

Just a couple of weeks ago while I was conducting a meeting in Marion, Indiana, I picked up the daily paper and there I read the news concerning the death of one of the most foremost newspaper commentators of our day, Boake Carter. He had been ill for just a little while. He was a national figure, a man of great brilliance, his "cheerio" was a household expression and he had many opportunities, apparently unlimited opportunities, and then God's clock struck the hour of his appointment with death and Boake Carter at only thirty-eight years of age was called out of this world into the next. Was he prepared? From all I understand he was not. It seems that he had been deluded and that he had false hopes of Heaven, but I tell you of his sudden death to illustrate the fact that we know not when God will see fit to take us out of this world and cause us to stand in His Presence. Again I say,

"... now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (II Cor. 6:2).

Don't delay to make preparation for Heaven, for "Heaven can't wait." You may be next.

V. HOW TO PREPARE FOR HEAVEN

Thank God, there is a way. A right way, an easy way, a wonderful way, God's way whereby everyone can make certain of Heaven. It is the only way. There is no other way.

"Verily, verily I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life"

Hear the Word

Now, notice what is said. Two great steps must be taken, and they are very simple ones. First of all, "hear" the Word of God. Listen to the Voice of God as He speaks through the pages of the Bible. Receive the message presented therein—the message telling man that he is a sinner, that he is without hope apart from the mercy of God, that God loved him enough to send His Son to die on the Cross to save him, that Jesus loved him enough to willingly come and pay the price of man's sin through the shedding of His Blood on Calvary's Tree, that in His death and resurrection, the Devil, Hell, sin and the grave were defeated, and salvation was provided for all who would receive it. Hear the Word! Then it gives the next great step.

Believe!

"Believe!" Have faith in God. Put your trust in Him. The greatest desire of God expressed in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation is that man should believe in Him, and God makes it clear in both Old and New Testaments that there is only one way. There has never been any other, and there never will be any other way to get right with God, and that is to place faith in Him, to trust Him as your personal Saviour. Having heard the Word and believed the Word, then God says:

"You shall not come into condemnation," but contrariwise, you are "passed from death unto life." You do not have to wait until you come to the end of this life to settle the matter. It is not necessary to wait until you go through the experience of death before you know whether or not you are to enjoy eternal life instead of eternal death. By hearing the Word and believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, you can have it settled right now! You can know on the basis of God's Word

that you have already passed out of the realm of death and into the realm of life, eternal life. How simple it is! Anyone can see that. Anyone who is willing to put aside personal prejudice, anyone who is willing to read the Word of God, just as it is and receive it at its face value can be saved. I say again that even a little child can understand it. Hear the Word, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will pass from death unto life and thus, you will make sure of Heaven.

Will you just now, as you read these words, bow before the Lord, confess the fact that you are a sinner and believe on Him as your Saviour with all of your heart? If you will, He will save you. He will save you from Hell. He will save you from sin. He will save you from the Second Death. He will save you from condemnation and He will start you on your way to Heaven. May

God grant you the courage to do it just now!

MY DECISION OF CHRIST

Date _____

Evangelist Robert J. Wells
145 N. Hale Street
Wheaton, Illinois

Dear Brother Wells:

I have read your sermon, "Heaven Can't Wait!" I realize the danger of delay. I confess myself a poor lost sinner. I believe that He died for my sins and is willing to save me now. Here and now I turn my heart to Him, I confess my sin and guilt, I depend on Him to save me! With all my heart I surrender to Him now and trust Him. I am writing this as my confession that today I take Christ as my Saviour. By His help I will try to live for Him the rest of my days.

Signed _____

Address _____

The Unpardonable Sin

(Continued from page one)

his teeth and saying, "Oh, if I had only turned from my sin of adultery!" No, dear friend, committing this awful eternal sin is not your only danger. Any sin that binds you and keeps you from making Jesus Christ your personal Saviour will land you into eternal separation from God.

I think of several such sins that are ruining men in this life and unless repented of will land them in Hell.

1. Adultery is not the unpardonable sin about which Jesus speaks in our text. Adulterers can be saved. They have been saved. I'll meet David, the ex-adulterer, on the Glory Side. I'll look into the face of the woman of Samaria who had had five husbands and was at the time our Lord dealt with her living with a man not her husband, when I get to Heaven. I'll shake hands with once scarlet women, now made pure, whom I have had the joy of leading to Christ.

But many who now walk the primrose path will die and scream for mercy throughout the endless reaches of eternity unless they repent of their awful sin and come to Jesus for salvation. Today adultery stalks our land, in the back alleys and on main streets, in hovels and palaces, in homes and churches. It is being fed by the modern movie, the licentious magazine, the lewd dress of supposedly good women, the breakdown of restraint. Thousands are being caught in its gaping grasp. Hell will be peopled by all such if they die in that condition. Be warned, my lost friend; die in your sins and you cannot go where Jesus is.

2. Cursing is not the awful sin of which Jesus speaks in our text. God saved me from the terrible, wicked sin of cursing. There is forgiveness for the man of the filthy mouth. The Apostle Peter was such a man, as witnesses by his lapse into swearing when he went back on his Lord; but there is forgiveness for such. Yet I sharply remind you that one of the almost universal sins of the hour is the use of God's Holy name by men, women, and even children to "cuss with." Once this sin was confined to the pool hall, the saloon, the barber shop, etc. Now we hear it on the bus, in the station, in the home, on the street. Once only "tough" men cursed. Now we hear it on every hand. My friend, this sin, unrepented of, will land you in Hell if you die in your sins," said Jesus.

3. Booze guzzling is not the unpardonable sin, but it is making drunkards on every side and 'no drunkard shall enter the streets of pearl.' God can and will save the drunkard, but (and I say it

reverently) he saves very few of them. For every booze drinker we reach for Jesus, perhaps ten or a hundred die in their sins without Christ and go to Hell. I warn you, my reader, you had better quit while you can. You had better repent before you die or you will have as companions throughout eternity the hardened sinners who blaspheme against the Holy Spirit.

4. Rejecting Christ is not the sin Jesus warns against in our text. I rejected Christ for years. Every effort to save me was rejected for much too long a time by me—but I am saved today. Perhaps all who now are saved rejected Christ when first He was offered them. How long suffering is God! How gentle is Christ! God saves Christ rejectors when in repentance and tears, they turn from rejection to acceptance.

But I warn you, this nation is fast becoming a Christ-rejecting nation. Unbelief grows on every hand. Despite radio messages, tracts, churches, revivals and many other efforts, millions who know about Christ, who have had his claims pressed upon them, go on in their rejection and will die and go to Hell unless they change their way. Are you a Christ rejector? Are you holding Him at arm's length? Do you keep the door of your heart bolted against Him? Be warned! That road leads to Hell and many are on it today.

II. WHAT IS THE UNPARDONABLE SIN? HOW IS IT COMMITTED?

I do not know all that the unpardonable sin is. I do know however that it has to do with the Holy Spirit and I would warn now of four vital facts:

1. You had better listen to the call of the Holy Spirit, for God cannot reach you except through Him.

I say it with all reverence, God cannot save the sinner who does not respond to the work of the Holy Spirit. No one can do for the sinner that which will bring him to salvation except the Holy Spirit. I preach against sin and against sins. I cry aloud with trumpet voice seeking to get men to see what sin is doing and will do to and for them. I know that none will seek a remedy for sin unless they are brought to see its blackness and its consequence. But as I preach I know that unless the Holy Spirit can take the message and plunge it into hearts, men will not be convicted of sin. My lost friend, do not sin against the only Person and Power who can show you your lost and undone condition.

Again, no one can bring men to Jesus except the Holy Spirit. We preachers point men to Jesus as

(Continued on page four)

With the Editor

(Continued from page one)

Last night girl and boy, teen age, brilliant and innocent in appearance, bright as a dollar, stood to tell how they were saved five years ago when I preached at the mission. Sunday night another teen age girl came to remind me that she was saved under my ministry here. But a large proportion of the converts here are men, and they turn out fine, too. Two years ago I preached in this rescue mission, just as I neared the end of my sermon, a young man, perhaps 32, came into the mission leading his mother by the hand. They sat down till I gave the invitation, as I recall, then came to the front. Both were nicely dressed. The mother did not lead the son, though she was saved—the son led the mother. With tears that young business man told how he had heard the radio broadcast that afternoon as he was at home getting over a big drunk. He was deeply convicted, could have no peace. In the evening he called his wife to his side, told her, "I am going to get Mother and go down to that mission and get saved." That is what he did. Yesterday I inquired about him, was told that he is living straight for God, that he gave \$1,200 in tithes during the last year!

One of the ushers Sunday night was saved as a result of my first visit here, I believe. He has a lovely wife and baby. A girl 18, testified Sunday night that she was saved a week ago here at the mission. She has no home to go to, lived at Memphis, Tennessee, started for the Pacific coast to see her sweetheart in the service. Stopping in Evansville she could find no room in the crowded city, asked the police where she could go, was sent to Evansville Rescue Mission. Here she was saved, has written her sweetheart of her conversion, told him if he would come with her for Christ, well and good, if not, the engagement was broken. She changed plans, is entering nurses training, is at the services each night with shining face, gives a happy testimony.

One man now in service was saved nine months ago. He told me how he came to the mission after a night in jail, after booze had broken his wife's health and broken his home and taken all his money for years. Now, after being saved nine months he has \$1,085 in the bank, more in war bonds, carries his Bible with him everywhere. He came in yesterday just to ask me to pray with him. His fervor, his tears of humility, his thanksgiving for his new heart

and changed life were wonderful.

Men are still being saved at Evansville Rescue Mission, Sunday night a young wife who had been saved a few days ago brought her husband to the services, and she and another convert talked to him. He has recently been discharged from the army overseas for reasons of health, I understand. He was happily saved. A man and wife came who had recently lost a baby came back to God. A young woman working in a war plant, attractive and intelligent, came with many tears to surrender to Christ. Seven came forward to confess Christ Sunday night; three men, two women, two boys. One was a Catholic, happily saved. Last night from a small Monday night crowd one fine looking, well dressed man saved, never having made a profession before. Another man, son of a Methodist preacher, a backslider for many many years, came back to Christ's presence and will, happily last night. God still saves men and women where the gospel in power is taken to them.

My book **The Coming Kingdom of Christ**, out of print for years, has been rewritten and revised, and is now being printed again. It is a large cloth bound book on prophecy, has now fifteen chapters, and will be ready, God willing, in a couple of months, possibly sooner. It will sell, we think, for \$1.00 a copy. We believe it will be very popular. Pray that it may be speedily ready to bless readers with the Bible teaching on the Second Coming of Christ, and His reign on earth, with related events.

PLEASE PRAY FOR: Big union revival campaign, Rice-Shufelt party, Cleveland, Ohio, Feb. 11—Mar. 11, City auditorium, sponsored by many churches and Christian organizations. Associate Editor Dr. Robert J. Wells is now in Cleveland helping organize for the campaign. **ALSO PRAY** that many may be saved through this issue of the **Sword of the Lord**, with messages specially adapted to the unsaved. Will you see that sinners read it? **ALSO PRAY** for burdens of the editor, we beg. Big office building is now being remodeled, heavy expenses, more grace is needed. Specially we ask you to pray for **Soul Winners Club** now being organized, for big **Christian Book Club**, to get best Christian books in the homes each month, with famous and distinguished panel of judges, great Christian leaders of many faiths, who will help the editors select the best books; and for soul winning booklets we are trying to spread. Our help is in the Lord!

What Is the Most a Woman Can Do in a Churchless Community?

By Lola Bradshaw

Dear Mrs. G—

Please forgive the delay in writing you in answer to your letter. You asked, "What is the most a woman can do in a churchless community?"

Of course, the first thing is to pray. "All things are possible to him that believeth"—Mark 9:23. The Lord is more interested in reaching sinners and building up the Christians than we are, and He wants to give someone for the work there, I am sure. He said, "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth laborers into His harvest."

But then there are a number of things you can do, and the Lord will guide you in the doing of them, if you commit yourself to Him and ask Him to lead you.

1. You can visit in the homes and seek to win individual souls to the Lord. You can give them good sermons and books to read. You can let them know you are praying for them and want to

see them saved. Then of course you will have to live as you talk, and by your own life above reproach and your earnestness and fervor and through the power of the Holy Spirit on your life, many will be convinced, no doubt, that they really need the Lord, and some will turn to the Lord, trusting Him for salvation. I didn't mean to omit mentioning the word of God in soul winning. Psalm 126:6 gives a brief outline of the essentials in soul winning, as follows:

- "He that goeth forth . . . Go out where sinners are.
- "and weepeth . . ." Concern and broken heart for sinners.
- "bearing precious seed . . ." The Word of God.
- "Shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." The certainty of results.

(Continued on page seven)

The Unpardonable Sin

(Continued from page three)

the remedy for sin. We turn all our power loose in an effort to get men, lost and hell-bound, to look to Jesus. There is life in a look. There is mercy with the Lord. There is pardon, full and free. There is liberty and freedom from the bondage of sin and the wages thereof. But only the Holy Spirit can make effective our efforts. Your mother can tell you of Jesus and His power to save. Your pastor, your Sunday School teacher, your loved one or friend may do what he or she can, but only God the Holy Spirit can open your blind eyes and bring you to rest your eternity-bound soul in the Saviour.

Years since, I heard a beloved preacher exclaim, "Oh, if I could only go to Hell and preach one gospel sermon, all in Hell would be saved!" But he was wrong. None in Hell would be saved. The Gospel would fall on dry ground in Hell, for the Holy Spirit is not there to convict and regenerate the believer. No, my friend, if you purpose to be saved, you will say yes to His voice now. You will believe His testimony. You will let Him bring you to Jesus in this life or it will be forever too late. God wants to save you. Surely God will leave no stone unturned to save you, but even God has no way to reach you except through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. In the name of your soul that must live somewhere as long as God lives, don't so sin against the Holy Spirit that he can never bring you to Jesus.

2. Again, you had better listen to the call of the Holy Spirit because unless he can prick your heart as at Pentecost you will never repent of your sins.

If you do not repent of your sins, then you will die in your sins and go to Hell. Our Lord says in John 8:24: "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." Brave, Holy Spirit-empowered Peter faced the throng at Pentecost with their terrible sin of having murdered God's Son. Some responded to the sermon by asking what they must do. The scripture reads, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart (conviction), and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" They were told to repent. Some did. Who did? Why the ones whose hearts had been pricked by the Holy Spirit concerning their sin.

Lost friend of mine, you will not be saved by some day deciding you will join the church or publicly profess faith in Christ. You will be saved, if you ever are, when you allow the Holy Spirit to convict you of your sins and then turning from them in deep contrition come to lean all your weight on Jesus the Saviour of sinners. Should the Holy Spirit leave you alone in your sins, should he cease to trouble your conscience and prick your heart and you will never repent. Jesus said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (Luke 13:3)

You may never commit the unpardonable sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, but unless the Holy Spirit can bring you to repentance you will land in the same Hell with the man who does.

3. You had better listen to the call of the Holy Spirit because it seems clear that, "My Spirit will not always strive with men." God will not always deal with rebellious sinners.

This was true in the days before the flood. The solemn charge, "My Spirit will not always strive with man," came to Noah. With that earnest abandon Noah must have prepared the ark and warned men. Surely He must have solemnly repeated this ultimatum to the people. And surely God's preacher today, knowing that God is no respecter of persons and therefore so acts today, will warn men not to continue to sin against the striving Holy Spirit for there comes a time when he gives men up.

He gave up on Pharaoh and his crowd. He gave up on Sodom and Gomorrah. He gave up on Korah and his followers. And when he did, disaster followed. If I could go to Hell now and preach to the people who were drowned in the flood, they would not be saved, for the Holy Spirit gave them up when "the door was shut." Never again has He or will He strive with them about their sins and their need of salvation. The door is forever shut.

Will He have to give you up, my friend? I beg you, listen to His voice. He says, "Today if ye hear His voice, harden not your hearts." (Heb. 3:7, 8).

4. I think I can tell you whether you have already committed the unpardonable sin. At least I am sure I can point you to a point of danger.

In Revelation 22:17 we have God's last charge and invitation. It reads, "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come," [here are the ones God entrusts with the happy task of extending his invitation]. "And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." [here are the ones invited].

You will notice that the ones invited are thus qualified:

First, him that is athirst.

Second, whosoever will.

Here is desire and choice. We are to go out and invite thirsty people who have yet the power of choice to come and take salvation freely. Are you thirsty for God

and holy living and salvation? Come on. Do you choose to come? Are you not sold out entirely to Satan and the slavery of sin? If not, come on! There is salvation for you. Those who want to come and choose to come may come freely. They have not committed the unpardonable sin.

But no one will be thirsty apart from the work of the Holy Spirit. And no one will come apart from the work of the Holy Spirit. If you have come to the place you have no desire Godward, you either have been left alone by the Holy Spirit or you are in mortal danger of that terrible act. Men tell me, "I do not feel like being saved." When they do I wonder if they speak the truth; for if they do, there is no hope of ever landing them for Jesus. Men chained in sins tell me they can't turn from them. If so, they are not among the 'whosoever will's' who can be saved. When I remember how sin deadens the conscience, blights noble emotions, and binds men as slaves; when I preach and men do not come to Jesus, when I remember that only the Holy Spirit can create a desire and thirst for salvation, I wonder if many have not so sinned that the Holy Spirit no longer strives with them.

People say, "I am not ready to be a Christian." They mean by that, that some day they will be ready. But they will never be ready unless their wicked hearts can be pricked by the Holy Spirit. They say they will accept Christ later, but they will never accept Christ except as they are drawn to Him by the Holy Spirit.

Beware, lost friend! The only person between you and eternal Hell is that Person who once did and, I trust, still does speak to you in that strange small voice. If you value your soul, do not reject his pleading any longer.

And now I come to close this message. I have admitted my great ignorance of my subject. I have tried to warn you of danger ahead. Now, may I make this honest proposition? Do you have any desire left to be saved? If so, act upon it! God gave you that desire. It is the work of the Holy Spirit. It is God in action, calling you to rest your soul's needs in Jesus. Acting on that God-giving desire, yield yourself to the Lord Jesus.

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hear you. He can and will forgive if you ask. He saves all who come unto Him for salvation, and the Holy Spirit brings all thirsty souls to Jesus who will let Him so do. Will you be one who says an eternal "yes"?

WHAT IS SIN?

(Continued from page one)

think there is a contradiction, it is because we have misunderstood or misinterpreted the Scripture.

We will not argue about this question, in this article. We will not argue about whether all men and women in the world, saved and lost, are sinners; God's Word says that they are. That is not what this article is about. Rather, our purpose here is to find from the Bible what sin is. Perhaps if we learn what sin really is, it will not be so hard for us to believe what God says about it and about us.

We believe that the following statements, each borne out by a definite and explicit Scripture, will help us to understand what sin is in God's sight.

1. Sin is any transgression of the law in act, in thought, or in implication (I John 3:4).

2. Neglect of any known duty is sin (James 4:17).

3. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Romans 14:23).

4. The very thought of foolishness is sin (Prov. 24:9).

5. Having not paid any vow to God is sin (Deut. 23:21).

6. Even to come short of the glory of God is sin (Romans 3:23).

Reader, according to these divine definitions of sin, do you sin?

I. Transgression of the Law is Sin

Any transgression of God's law is sin. First John 3:4 says, "Whoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."

We may say that the law is summed up in the Ten Commandments. The ceremonial law is summed up, in some sense, in the Sabbath commandment. All the moral law is summed up in the other nine. The ceremonial laws were expressly commanded to Jews under the law, and to nobody else. For a Jew to violate ceremonial law before the handwriting of ceremonial ordinances was nailed to the cross, would be sin. Since the ceremonial commands were never for anybody but the Jews, others were not required to keep them.

But the other nine of the Ten Commandments concern moral matters and are binding on every person in the world.

The Ten Commandments as given in Exodus, chapter 20, are as follows:

1. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

2. "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them. . . ."

3. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain."

4. "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy."

5. "Honour thy father and thy mother."

6. "Thou shalt not kill."

7. "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

8. "Thou shalt not steal."

9. "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour."

10. "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's."

Colossians 2:16, 17 clearly tell us that the ceremonial laws, including the Sabbath commandment, are not binding on Christians now; they were only "a shadow of things to come" and are already fulfilled in Christ. But anyone who breaks any other of these plain commandments, sins. Sin is a transgression of the law. Every transgression of the commandments addressed to us, is sin.

To love or worship anything else in the world before God is wicked sin, violating the first commandment.

To bow down to or to worship before a worship center of any kind, say, with a picture of Christ, or an image of the virgin Mary, or a crucifix, or a likeness of a saint, is sin, transgressing the law, especially the second commandment.

To take the name of the Lord God in vain is a sin. Whether that is done in cursing, or using God's name as a byword, or saying, "Praise the Lord," when we do not mean it from the heart, or to pretend to address God in prayer when actually we are thinking more of the people hearing than of God hearing, or when we close our prayer saying, "In Jesus' name," when we are not really asking it for Jesus' sake, it is the same wicked sin, violating the third commandment.

Not to honor father and mother is a sin. It is a sin, even if your father is a drunkard, not to honor him. It is a sin not to honor your mother even if she is unsaved and you are saved. And to honor father and mother, Jesus taught in Mark 7:9-13, means also to provide for their needs. Failing to provide for father and mother when they are old or dependent, is sin.

Murder, adultery, stealing, bearing false witness, and coveting anything belonging to one's neighbor, are all sins, transgressing God's law.

Not only is it a sin to break the Ten Commandments in deed. It is equally a sin to break them in thought, in intention, in desire.

This is illustrated by the words of Jesus in Matthew 5:28, "I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." Lust is adultery in God's sight.

It is illustrated also by I John 3:15 which says, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer." Hate is murder in God's sight.

So a heart affection for money is idolatry as much as bowing down to an idol, in God's sight. So, coveting is stealing, in God's sight. Any breaking of these commandments in the heart is sin.

These Ten Commandments are summed up in two by the Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 22:37-40:

"Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

To love God with all your heart, soul and mind is the first and most important commandment. It sums up all duty toward God. To love your neighbor as yourself, sums up all duty to humankind, and that is the second commandment. On

these two, said Jesus, hang all the law and the prophets. This is a summing up of all human duty.

Commands to do are simply particular details of the one great command to love. Any keeping of God's commandments which does not simply, naturally flow out of a heart full of love for God and all mankind, does not really fulfill the law. One might outwardly be perfectly blameless concerning the Ten Commandments, yet have violated every one of them in his heart.

Do you love your neighbor as much as you love yourself? Are you as anxious for your neighbor to prosper, to make money, as for yourself to prosper? Do you care as much about your neighbor's having food as about having it yourself? When you trade or do business with a perfect stranger, are you really thinking just as much about doing him good as about doing yourself good? If not, then really you are breaking the Ten Commandments and are guilty of sin.

II. Neglect of Any Known Duty is Sin

"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin," says James 4:17. Every time you miss any duty, every time you postpone what you ought to do today, you sin. If you know anything that you ought to do differently about than you now do, then you are living in sin. Let us illustrate this truth.

1. To cease praying, even for a moment, is sin. Samuel said in I Samuel 12:23, "God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you." Ceasing to pray is a sin! First Thessalonians 5:17 says, "Pray without ceasing." In Luke 18:1 we are told of Jesus, "And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint." Men ought always to pray and never give up, never cease, said Jesus. In Romans 12:12 we are commanded to be "instant in prayer." In Ephesians, chapter 6, we are commanded to put on the whole armor of God, and verse eighteen says, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."

How strong are these commands of God! "Pray without ceasing," "Men ought always to pray," "continuing instant in prayer," "praying always with all prayer." To ever cease praying for a moment violates the plain command of God, and the Bible calls ceasing to pray a sin.

A little thought will show that to pray all the time one must have his whole subconscious nature saturated with prayer: always in touch with God, always yearning for the will of God, asleep or awake, conscious or unconscious, busy or at leisure. The Christian who ever ceases to pray, sins!

"Impossible!" somebody says. Well, let us not argue about that. Whether it is possible or impossible, that is exactly what the Bible commands one to do; and not to do it is a sin. "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

2. For a Christian not to win souls continually, it is sin. The Great Commission command of Jesus is to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. And Jesus said in Matthew 4:19, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." If you really follow Jesus, you will win souls. If you do not win souls, it is a sin.

"I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing," said Jesus in John 15:5. If you abide in Christ, you will bring forth fruit, even much fruit. If we do not abide in Christ, we sin. Verse 4 of the same chapter plainly commands, "Abide in me, and I in you." Abiding is

a known duty; not to abide in Christ and bear fruit, is a sin. Christians who do not win souls regularly, consistently, frequently are guilty of sin in this matter.

Jesus said that a Christian is the light of the world, the salt of the earth. Christians who have not lost their salt, or let their light be hidden under a bushel, can win souls.

3. Not to meditate day and night in the Bible is a sin. Psalm 1:2 describes the upright and godly man as follows: "But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night." Joshua was commanded to meditate in the Book of the Law day and night. Psalm 119 is full of teaching that the Scripture should be the constant delight and meditation of the child of God. Psalm 19:10 says of the Scriptures, "More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb." To read, to memorize, to meditate on, to follow with the whole heart the teachings of the Scripture—that is the plain duty of every Christian. In proportion as we fail to meditate day and night in the Scriptures, to love them better than food, to find them sweeter than honey, we sin against God! Do you read the Bible all you ought to read it? Do you love it as you ought to love it? Is it sweet to you as it was to David? If you read the Bible every day as much as God allows you to and if to spend more time with the Bible would be a fault or sin, then you do well. If it would be good for you to read and study and love the Bible more, then you are sinning not to do so, for "to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

III. "Whatsoever is Not of Faith is Sin"

It does not take murder to be sin. There are more sins than adultery. To transgress the law is sin, to fail to do any known duty is sin. And Romans 14:23 says, "And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin."

The immediate context of this Scripture concerns the eating of meat offered to idols. An idol is really nothing at all but a piece of wood or stone or metal. Certainly an idol is not a god if a man does not regard it so. Thus, some Christians would feel that meats first offered to idols and then sold in the butcher shops had no religious significance, good or bad, and their consciences could feel no reproach for eating such meats. But in any case that one should feel unsure, should doubt whether this was right or not, the Scripture clearly says that to eat under such cases would be a sin. "For whatsoever is not of faith is sin."

Remember that Hebrews 11:6 tells us, "Without faith it is impossible to please Him." Therefore, anything one does without faith displeases God. Everything you do that you cannot do in faith, in good confidence, is a sin. Whatever you do that you have doubts about, is a sin, whether it is eating what you are not sure it is right to eat, or going where you are not sure it is right to go, or even preaching a sermon when you are not sure it is the sermon you should preach! Anything in the world which is not based on faith is sin, says the Scripture. "For whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Faith is the highest virtue. Unbelief is the wickedest sin.

Here is the reason that fretting and worry are such sins. John Wesley said, "I would no more fret than to curse and swear." To fret is as much a sin as to curse and swear, because it violates that one great principle of pleasing God. You worry about tomorrow because you do not have faith in God's promises to keep you and supply your needs. You are unhappy about your prayers because

you do not believe that God has heard them or will answer them. You are worried or uneasy about loved ones who are absent because you really do not believe that God will care for them. You really do not believe that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28). You do not tithe and give liberal offerings besides, to the Lord and His cause? Then that is because you do not really believe all the wonderful promises God has made about caring for His own. You are not willing to whip your children, not willing to go against sentiment of your community to do what God has commanded about a separated life? Then the trouble is that you do not believe that God will make it pay. You do not have faith about the matter, and therefore you sin.

Perhaps you are a wife and you cannot believe that God wants you to obey your unsaved husband and to be subject to him and thus win him, as I Peter 3:1-7 commands you to do. You fear it will turn out disastrously? Then your sin is the sin of unbelief. You do not believe God. And whatsoever is not of faith is sin. In every little detail in which you do not joyously trust the Lord and rest in Him, in that you sin! "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin."

V. "The Thought of Foolishness is Sin"—Prov. 24:9

Some people feel they never sin because they never kill anybody, they never get drunk, they never commit adultery, at least outwardly. You who think so, I ask you this question: Do you ever have a foolish thought? Then the Scripture says, "The thought of foolishness is sin."

Ephesians 5:3, 4 tells us that certain sins should not once be named among Christians as becoming to saints, "nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient." Foolish talking is a sin. How many Christians ever say anything foolish? Jest is a sin. It should "not be once named among you, as becometh saints," says the Scripture. I confess I do not know all that that Scripture means. I do not believe that wit and humor are necessarily wrong. "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine" (Prov. 17:22), we are told. So a merry heart is certainly not wrong. The wit that God gave us is not wrong. God made monkeys and He must surely enjoy their antics. God made our wit and He must have intended us to use it. But talking without good aim or intention, just chattering, is a sin. And wit for its own sake is thus a sin. A joke might be seriously used to illustrate a blessed truth or to teach a fine lesson to the glory of God. But not once in the Bible is there a joke told simply as a joke. Not once did Jesus Himself ever joke for joking's sake. Every word has a serious and holy intention. And so it ought to be in our lives. When we are merry, we ought to be merry for Jesus' sake. And nothing ought to be said but what Jesus would approve and what we would gladly say in His presence. Never ought a word to be said but that which will help to win souls, help to teach the Word, help to edify and bless the saints. Foolish talking and jesting is a sin.

But here we find that even the

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WHAT IS SIN?

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thought of foolishness is sin. Some people who would not think of talking foolishly, or who would not intentionally talk foolishly, are guilty of foolish thoughts. That is one remarkable thing about God: He always judges the heart and not just the outward act. And what man or woman or child is there alive in the world who never has a foolish thought? The prohibition here is not on thinking about wicked things only, but even the thinking about foolish things, silly things! God does not forbid here simply thinking wickedly. Of course that is wrong. But to think foolishly is also wrong, a sin! "The thought of foolishness is sin."

We are told by the Saviour that "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matt. 12: 36, 37). Idle words are sinful. But what about idle thoughts? Even the thought of foolishness is sin. Or to say it in another way, foolish thoughts are sinful.

My own heart condemns me on this matter. I am overwhelmed. I can make no pretense that I have so mastered my thoughts that never even a thought is idle or foolish or vain. I could not even say that my deeds are always to the glory of God. Much less could I say that my words always please Him, for James 3:8 plainly says that "The tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison." And again James 3:2 says, "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man." I say, I do not even pretend to have conquered my tongue and that my words are never foolish, never silly, never vain. Then, God help me, how I could claim that my thoughts are never idle thoughts, or foolish thoughts, and thus sinful in the sight of a holy God?

If sin extends even to the thoughts and if not only wicked thoughts are sin, but if foolish thoughts are sin, then who in the world can say he does not sin? I, for one, cannot!

V. Any Vow to God Unpaid, is Sin

Broken vows are sin. Uncompleted vows are sin. This is a clear teaching of the Word of God. For Deuteronomy 23:21 says, "When thou shalt vow a vow unto the Lord thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the Lord thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee."

Slackness in keeping vows is a sin, so says the Word of God!

The immediate application of this principle in the Scripture quoted is in the matter of bringing offerings or sacrifices to God. One who promised a free-will offering must bring it, says the following verse. But the principle is the same everywhere in God's dealing with man and man's duty to God. When a man makes a vow to God, then fails to pay it, it is a sin to Him.

I suppose that only when God Himself should specifically show that it was wrong to make the vow, would one ever be released from the duty to pay it. Abraham in his heart gave up his son, Isaac, to God and was willing to slay his son, but God stopped him. In his heart, Abraham paid the vow and would have completed the proposed sacrifice actually, but God forbade it. But when we "slack to pay it," as the Scripture says, about any vow we have made God, that is a sin.

New Year's resolutions? Yes, I think we ought to make them. Usually we only make New Year's resolutions when we have a clear conviction that it is our solemn duty to do it. But your duty is made all the more compelling

when you have registered a vow to God. Did you promise to read the Bible through this year? I have no doubt that you ought to read it through. But when you promise God you have added extra sin when you do not keep your promise. Did you promise to spend a certain time in prayer. I have no doubt that you ought to have spent at least as much time in prayer as you promised God and not to do so would have been a sin, even without any vow. But when you make a vow to God and slack to pay it, then that of itself is a sin.

How many things I have promised God! And how many times I have failed to keep my vow to God! I cannot say that I am without sin as long as I have a single vow to God unfulfilled; as long as I find myself ever slacking on any promise I made to God, ever neglecting, ever postponing my promised duty, it is a sin.

VI. Even Coming Short of the Glory of God is Sin

"For there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," says Romans 3:22, 23. All have come short of the glory of God! That is the measure and depth of our sin!

The more we study this sin question, the more it becomes apparent that all of us are sunk in sin all the time. Here we find that the Scripture plainly requires a certain standard of righteousness and holiness equal to that of God Himself. God not only requires that you love, but that you love as God loves. God not only requires holiness, but the same kind of holiness that He Himself has. God not only requires power but His own abundance of power. The only way for anybody to claim sinlessness is to actually attain to that glorious holiness that God Himself has! Oh, every creature of this poor fallen race has sinned and come short of the glory of God!

But is not this the same standard held up for us all the way through the Bible? Jesus commanded us to love not our friends but our enemies and to bless them that curse us and to do good to them that hate us and to pray for those which despitefully use us and persecute us so we will be like our Heavenly Father who makes the sun to rise on the evil and on the good and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust (Matt. 5: 44, 45). And then Jesus said, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." When you talk about being without sin, then you are talking about being perfect like God.

Sometimes people claim, "Christian perfection," which, they say, is not the same as absolute perfection. They admit they have some errors, some faults, some weaknesses; but say that these are not sin. How different from the Bible teaching is that doctrine! No, God's standard, the perfect standard is this: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Any lack of all the glory of God is sin. So all of us have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

"Well, if Jesus commanded it, then He meant for us to be perfect," someone says. "If we ought to be perfect as God is, then we can be." Let us admit frankly that everyone ought to be perfect. Let us admit that it is sin when we are less than perfect. But when we fail to do what God has commanded us to do, then let us not blame God with our sin, our failure.

What kind of a standard do you think the Lord Jesus ought to have set? Do you think that He, knowing our weakness, ought to have set His standard of holiness and righteousness down to our capacity? Should Jesus have said,

"Do not try to be perfect like your Father in Heaven; just try to be as nearly perfect as some men are"? What standard could our Holy Saviour indorse other than His own standard of perfection and righteousness? When one of my daughters once told me a lie, I said to her, "Don't you ever tell an untruth again!" Was I wrong to set a perfect standard, though the girl was frail and weak and because of her sinful nature she was certain to miss the perfect standard somewhere, sometime? Should I have said, "You must never lie except about once a month"? Such a thought is foolish. Right is right, whether we reach it or not. And Christ could only set the perfect standard by which He Himself lived, the standard of the perfection of the Father. I ought to reach that, but I do not. Every other man and woman and child in the world ought to be good in every detail, but is not. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

You see that sin is more than doing; it is being also. Sin is not only when you do wrong but when you are wrong. Sin is not so much a matter of the hands as it is of the heart.

Jeremiah 17:9 says, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" Every honest person can say that even of his own heart. My heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. I myself do not know the depth of its sin. Many, many times I have talked to people in jails who have committed some dreadful crime; and they have said to me, "I do not know what made me do it! I never dreamed that I would be guilty of such a thing." I talked to a woman an hour after she had shot and killed another woman. She seemed to be astonished that she was a murderer. Actually, she had been a murderer long weeks, months before when hatred had flamed hot and bitter in her heart against the woman who had stolen her husband's affection. Her heart was deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. It was more wicked than she herself knew. And so it is with every one of us.

Leviticus 4:2 says, "Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a soul shall sin through ignorance against any of the commandments of the Lord concerning things which ought not to be done, and shall do against any of them" a certain sacrifice shall be offered. "If a soul shall sin through ignorance"! How strange that anybody should ever sin and not know it! Again, Leviticus 4:22 mentions that a ruler may sin through ignorance. And then verse 23 says, "Or if his sin, wherein he hath sinned, come to his knowledge." What a strange doctrine is this, that men may sin without knowing it, sin without intending it, and later simply find out that they are sinners, that they have sinned against God! God surely means that sin is in the subconscious mind, as well as in the conscious mind. People do wrong when they are thinking about it, and people also do wrong when they are not thinking about it. People do wrong when they know better, and sometimes they do wrong when they do not know better; and in both cases the Bible calls it sin. Sin is really a part of our wicked, fallen nature. Sin is the wickedness that we are, not only the wickedness that we do. All of us have sinned and come short of the glory of God, because we are fallen creatures with sinful natures. That is the meaning of Paul's statements, divinely inspired, in the seventh chapter of Romans. "For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do" (vs. 19). "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my mem-

bers" (vs. 22, 23). "So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin" (vs. 25). With Paul's conscious mind, with his intentions, with his love and devotion he longed to serve God. But soaked deep into his poor, fallen nature was a fact that Paul could not deny. He was a sinner. His carnal nature was a fallen nature. He fell short of the glory of God. He surely could not claim to be the holy and gloriously righteous being that God was. He admitted it. Well, we ought to admit the same thing, for it is true. We have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

A man, a sincere, earnest Christian, told me once, "I have not been conscious of sin for fifteen years." What then? Did the fact that he was not conscious of sin prove that he did not sin? Certainly not! I think he was sincere when he said that he did not want to sin. I think also that he hoped he did not sin. I think that furthermore he was not quite open to conviction as to the fact that he sinned. Claiming to be without sin, he yet joined in opposing a great revival where many were being saved. But when we are wrong or when we do wrong, whether we are conscious of it or not, still it is sin. Any transgressing of the law, even in spirit, is sin, whether we are conscious of it or not. Any lack of doing what we know is right is a sin, whether we are conscious of it or not. Any decision, or act, or condition which is not of faith is sin, whether we are conscious of it or not. Any thought of foolishness is sin, any vow to God unpaid is sin. Any lack of the glory of God is sin!

That is the reason that I John 1:8 says, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." Having sin, is not quite the same as doing sin. I think. The man who murders another man has committed a sin, has done a sin in outward act. But the one who has in his heart a lurking grudge which he has never even recognized and of which he is not conscious, has sinned in his heart. I have sometimes been shocked to find that when I had, I thought, perfectly forgiven some person for a wrong done me, later I found the grudge still in my heart. That was not a sin of which I had been conscious. Certainly it was not a sin which I intended. But I could never say that I have no sin. If I did say it, I would only be deceiving myself, talking about things where I am not perfectly informed. My heart is so deceitful I could not ever rightfully say that no sin lurks there in my fallen being.

"If thou bring thy gift to the altar," said Jesus, "and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee . . ." Why is it that the man who brought a gift to the altar did not remember his unpaid debt, his sin unconfessed and unrepented, until he came to God's altar? How often we are never conscious of our sins until we try to approach God in prayer!

Remember that David after his terrible sin with Bath-sheba seemed not to have been much convicted on the subject, though the Scripture clearly tells us that he was a man who loved God and sought to please God. When the prophet Nathan told him the parable of the rich man who took the poor man's ewe lamb, David's anger flamed hot against that terrible injustice and he did not recognize himself as the sinner until Nathan said, "Thou art the man!" How strange that David should never have felt the enormity of his sin until it was brought to his attention by the prophet of God! And then what heart-broken praying he did! The Fifty-first Psalm has been the model prayer for millions of poor, sinning Christians who find they have grieved God, who have brought reproach on the cause of Christ, who have lost the joy of their salvation,

and thus come, in these burning, penitent, pleading words to confess their sin and beg forgiveness! You see, our sins are buried so deep in our natures that often we are not conscious of them until God in His mercy brings them to our attention.

The point I am making is that this wicked, fallen state itself is sin. Even to come short of the glory of God is a sin. And who of all my readers can say that he himself has not fallen short of the glory of God? Who can say that this moment he is still not falling short of the glory of God?

I think I hear someone answer, as my people have answered me before: "But, Brother Rice, you are talking about mistakes, and weaknesses. We ought not to call them sins. To come short of the glory of God might be a mistake of the head but not of the heart." Well, the answer is this, that the only people in the universe of God who are sinless do not make mistakes even in the head. God never makes a mistake of the head. Christ, His sinless Son, our Saviour, never did make a mistake either of the head or of the heart. The angel hosts who have never sinned, never make a mistake of the head, just as they never make a mistake of the heart. You could not find one of all the millions of holy beings in Heaven who makes any mistake whatever as long as he does not sin. Mistakes and sin go together. They are altogether a part of falling short of the glory of God.

Where people do not sin, they are never sick. Where people do not sin, they are never discouraged. Where people do not sin, they never die. Jesus Himself could not die until He "was made sin for us". Where people do not sin, they are never ignorant, they are never weak, they are never mistaken. These are the marks of sinful men. Those who fall short of the glory of God are sinners. Here is the clear teaching of the Word of God that to fall short of His glory is sin!

What better standard could we have for righteousness than this! Sometimes unconverted people set themselves up beside church members and say, "I live as good a life as church members do." Ah, but church members are not the standard! And so to the Christian I would say, do not judge yourself by your conscience. Do not judge yourself by other Christians. Do not judge yourself by what you think are your possibilities. Judge yourself only by Jesus Christ, and by God the Father. If you have fallen short of the glory of God, then you are a sinner.

Some Lessons from the Bible Doctrine of Sin

The doctrine of sin is the foundation teaching of all the Bible. Without a correct understanding of what sin is, we cannot know what salvation is. All the doctrines of grace, of judgment, of salvation, of Heaven, of Hell, of eternal security and of everlasting damnation depend on the Bible doctrine of sin. I call to your attention some conclusions, then, from this Bible doctrine of sin.

1. There is absolutely no hope of anybody's being saved by good deeds. "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:20). And again, "But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith" (Gal. 3:11). Since all of us in the world are such deep-dyed sinners; so guilty before God; so sinful in nature, in heart, in actions, there is no hope for anybody to ever be saved on the basis of good works.

Someone may say, "But, Brother Rice, you have set an impossible standard. It is hardly fair to judge people so closely. No matter how earnestly and sincerely people try, they could not reach the standard you have set." Surely

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you must mean that they cannot reach the standard God has set. I did not set it. Does that seem hopeless to you? Then evidently you need to find a plan of salvation that is not dependent on your own good deeds. You need to find a plan of salvation based on the mercy of God and an atoning sacrifice, who knows how to save sinners who do not deserve it!

Someone may feel that I have taken the microscope of God's Word and looked too closely at the little soiled spots on the garment of your righteousness. If so, I remind you that God's eyes are clearer than mine and that you could never stand in His presence in soiled garments. Oh, how you need to make sure that you have another robe, the robe of Christ's own righteousness, to cover all your sin and failure! Since all of us are such wicked sinners, all of us ought to be in Hell. If we got our just deserts, we would be ruined, lost, condemned forever. Oh, then, that makes necessary salvation by the blood of Christ! There is no other way to be saved. No man can save himself. No man deserves to be saved. The purest woman who ever lived ought to be in Hell, yea, will be in Hell, if she does not trust in Jesus Christ for mercy. The saintliest priest or prophet or preacher who ever lived never was for thirty seconds good enough to deserve salvation. Only the blood of Jesus Christ could keep him out of Hell, and that is the only remedy for us all.

2. Since all of us are such guilty sinners and have so fallen short of the glory of God, God has to keep us on the same basis that He saves us, wholly by grace and without works. We are undeserving sinners when we get saved. We are undeserving sinners after we get saved. Only the mercy of God could keep us out of Hell long enough to save us. Only the mercy of God could keep us saved after we are saved. Salvation is not of works. We are too great sinners to ever be saved by our good deeds. And so the preservation of God's people is not on account of their deservings or their "holding out faithful" or their good works.

CHURCHLESS COMMUNITY

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2. The Scripture says in James 1:27: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

Visiting those in need is another important thing a Christian woman can do; in many cases better than a man could do. There are many who are lonely and sorrowing and in need of comfort. This is one of the things the Lord expects of us.

3. You could talk to your neighbors and friends about starting a Sunday School in the neighborhood, and a church. As a woman you would not want to assume a place of authority over men, and you should not teach men nor young men. But a woman can teach women's classes and classes of children. Surely there is some good men in the community who knows the Lord and wants to win souls who would consent to take the leadership in such a work. If there is not, pray that the Lord will lay it on the heart of some of them, or that He will send a man for that purpose.

4. Many women gather children into their homes on week-days and teach them the Bible. Or you could have a class of women some week-day, or on Sunday, who could meet the younger women. (Titus 2:3, 4, 5).

It must be wholly by the grace of God. If God should let me live fifty years longer and if every day of my life I would seek with all my heart to do His will; if I should constantly seek to win souls; if I should give of my means far more than other men give; if I should voluntarily live in direst poverty; if I should spend days, weeks in fastings and tears and prayer for sinners, yet only the mercy of God could keep me out of Hell. I did not deserve salvation when I got it, and I do not deserve it now. This naturally must follow from the Bible doctrine of the depth of man's sin. The God who saves must also keep. A sinner who cannot deserve saving, cannot deserve keeping.

3. Self-righteousness is a wicked sin, unbecoming any Christian. Paul said that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (I Tim. 1:15). No boasting there! Read the heartbroken prayer and confession of Daniel in the ninth chapter of Daniel. No boasting there! Cain had confidence in the value of the works of his hands, but they were an abomination to God and God would not receive his offering. The Pharisee who went up into the temple to pray and boasted of his righteousness was a poor, ungodly sinner, after all, who died and went to Hell, unforgiven. And Jesus said of all who judge others, "Thou hypocrite!" (Matt. 7:5). The ones against whom Jesus hurled the hottest invectives of all His ministry were the self-righteous Pharisees. Let us not be like them. Oh, for penitent hearts to confess and lament our sins! Oh, for humble, child-like hearts to depend not at all on our holding out faithful, on our doing good deeds, on our so-called "holiness" or "sanctification" or "baptism" to gain us any favor with God, but to depend wholly on this, that the Lord Jesus Christ died for sinners. In His righteousness, in His love, in His mercy, in His tender forgiveness, oh, in them be all our peace, and all our boasting and all our hope for salvation and security in time and eternity!

5. You could gather groups together for prayer. It would not be long until the Lord put it on the hearts of others to help in the work. And new converts could be interested in the prayer meetings, in Bible study, and in winning other souls.

You see there is no end to the work a Christian woman can do if she is wholly given over to the Lord and has His power and blessing on her life.

I trust that this letter will be of some help to you, and that the Lord will fill you with Himself and make you a blessing to many hearts.

In the Saviour's name, yours,
(Miss) Lola Bradshaw
Assistant to the editor,
The Sword of the Lord

P.S. Dr. Rice is so busy, that he asked me to write you for him. He has read this letter, and agrees with it.—L.B.

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The Soul Winner's Club

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THE SWORD OF THE LORD
Evangelists John R. Rice and Robert J. Wells, Directors

People do care! They are interested in men and women who know not the Lord Jesus Christ. Applications for Membership in the Soul Winner's Club are coming in on every hand. Already we have received applications from the following states: Minnesota, Missouri, Alabama, Illinois, Nebraska, Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, New York, Tennessee, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Oklahoma.

Here are some excerpts from a letter I am sending to all new members of The Soul Winner's Club:

"Dear Soul Winner,

"Thank you for your application for membership in the Soul Winner's Club. We note you have carefully signed the Soul Winner's Pledge and are in agreement with our objectives as set forth in the pledge. Therefore, we are sending you herewith your membership card. Keep it with you as a constant reminder of your responsibility to God and man as one who has promised God to give yourself to the task of reaching the lost for Christ.

"Under separate cover we are sending you the Soul Winner's Pack containing special helps for soul winning work. First of all, there is the book, 'The Soul Winner's Fire.' It is especially for you since you will need its message, its inspiration, its vision and to be set afire with the passion of which it speaks. Prayerfully read it at your earliest convenience. 'Practical Notes on Soul Winning,' is a booklet of soul winning instructions, giving special helps for dealing with various kinds of sinners. Read this booklet carefully with regard to suggestions and seek to become thoroughly acquainted with the Scriptures given. They are choice verses and are especially applicable to the needs of all classes of sinners.

"Also included in the pack are 25 copies of Dr. Rice's well-known tract, 'What Must I Do to Be Saved?' There are a number of copies of the tract, entitled, 'God's Simple Plan of Salvation,' by Rev. Ford Porter. These tracts are for use in dealing with the unsaved. Two copies of the popular and widely distributed tract, 'Safety, Certainty and Enjoyment' by the English evangelist, George Cuttin, are included for special help in dealing with those who do not have assurance of salvation. In addition, you will find Dr. Rice's booklet, 'Can a Saved Person Ever Be Lost?' to be of very special value to you. For additional help in dealing with the unsaved, you will find the booklet on 'Hell,' 'All Have Sinned,' 'A Good Man Lost and a Bad Man Saved,' and 'Religious But Lost,' to be of real value. Each booklet deals with separate problems and presents help for special cases. There will be many with whom you will deal who will need help which is especially presented in the booklet, 'The Unequal Yoke.' For the backslider there is a booklet on this subject by Dr. Rice. Many young people need special help and the booklet on 'Petting and the Scarlet Sin' will be of great assistance there.

"One of the most popular books published by The Sword of the Lord" (Continued on page 8)

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The Soul Winner's Club

(Continued from page 7)

Lord' which has been used to lead many to Christ is the booklet on 'Bible Facts About Heaven' (Sweet Home of the Lord Jesus and Departed Saints). Elderly people and those who have lost loved ones will be blessed by the message of this book. These booklets are included in the pack for the purpose of helping you, but you will no doubt, feel you ought to have a supply of several or perhaps, all of these tracts and booklets so you may use them in your soul winning labors.

"I would like to say a word about the Record and Report Form we are enclosing. One form is called 'The Monthly Report Card.' We are sending two copies. This form is to be used for checking your progress in accordance with the Soul Winner's Pledge. There is a space for each day of the month and a column in which you are to indicate the amount of time spent in prayer; a column in which you are to indicate the number of chapters read from the Bible. The third column deals with numbers of souls dealt with. You are to indicate in this column the number of people with whom you have dealt concerning their spiritual needs; in the fourth column indicate the number of professions of salvation, that is, how many people with whom you have dealt who have definitely professed faith in Christ as their Savior. The fifth column provides space for indicating the number of backsliders with whom you have dealt who have been reclaimed to the Lord. The last column is for use in checking your progress in the Christian life. Here you are to indicate whether your progress has been 'victorious,' just 'fair,' or 'unsuccessful.' Each column should be filled in each day in the month on one of the forms provided. The extra form is to be kept for the following month and we will supply you with one additional form each month of the year as you make your report.

"At the end of the month you are to tabulate your 'Member's Monthly Report Card,' and fill in the totals at the bottom of each column. Then you are to transfer the totals to their proper place on the other form which we call 'The Member's Achievement Record.' This form should be pasted in your Bible or New Testament, or kept in a special place and from month to month an accurate record of your achievements on the basis of the Soul Winner's Pledge must be kept. When you have transferred the total figures from the Member's Monthly Report Card to the Member's Achievement Record Form, then enclose the completed Monthly Report Card in the self-addressed envelope which is enclosed in the Soul Winner's Pack and send it to The Soul Winner's Club headquarters, at Wheaton. We then make record of your accomplishments for our files and will mail to you another copy of the Member's Monthly Report Card so that you will always have one on hand.

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Notice to Soul Winners: I will send you FREE as many of the above named two-page, to-the-point gospel tract as you can prayerfully use. I want the cooperation of Christians interested in reaching the lost with the gospel.

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This is a vital part of the responsibilities of each member of the club and we trust you will not fail in maintaining your record daily, and mailing your report to us.

"Please feel free to write us about your soul winning problems. So, when you return your report any comments you have to make concerning your activities and any questions pertaining to soul winning problems should be indicated and we will see that they receive personal attention at our earliest convenience. We are interested in winning souls and want to help you in your efforts.

"May I suggest that we should always be interested in enlisting others in the Soul Winner's Club? When we win others for Christ, or when we come in contact with those who are already saved, we ought to talk to them about regular, systematic, soul winning effort and if they are not enrolled in the Soul Winner's Club, we ought to do our best to encourage them to make application for membership at once. We are enclosing an extra application blank to assist you in this work. If you need others, we shall be happy to supply you with the desired number.

"Because you are interested in soul winning and we desire to help you, and because The Sword Publishers are a non-profit organization, we want to make it easy for you to secure material which will help you in soul winning work. Therefore, as a member of the club, we offer you the privilege of a 40 per cent discount on additional copies of the books included in the Soul Winner's Pack and in the entire ten-cent series. This means any book or tract included in the Soul Winner's Pack and any book in the special series of ten-cent booklets by Dr. Rice, may be purchased from us at a discount of 40 per cent. This discount does not apply to other books, tracts or booklets not included in the Soul Winner's Pack or the ten-cent series.

"May the Lord's richest blessing rest upon you as you engage in reaching lost men and women for the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray that He will bless you with unusual wisdom and power, that you will be filled with the Spirit for this special work. Praying for the Lord's richest blessings upon you and for great and wonderful success in winning souls in 1945, I am

"Yours in Calvary's Tie,
"ROBERT J. WELLS,
"Director."

Wouldn't you like to be a member of The Soul Winner's Club? Why not sign the Soul Winner's Pledge which follows, and enclose a dollar, together with your name and address on the Application Form? Do it right away.

THE SOUL WINNER'S CLUB

145 N. Hale Street, Wheaton, Ill.

The Soul Winner's Pledge

"With God's help, I will earnestly endeavor to be a real soul winner from this day forth. I promise the Lord to read my Bible daily, to live a life of separation from the things of the world, to spend at least one-half hour daily in prayer, to regularly and prayerfully deal with needy souls in an attempt to lead them to Christ and into a victorious Christian life, and to make regular monthly reports to the directors of the club on the forms provided for this purpose."

(Signed.....)

"I will pay my vows unto the Lord in the presence of all his people."—Psalm 116:14.

Enclosed please find \$_____ for the Soul Winner's Pack and Enrollment in the Soul Winner's club.

Name

Address

"... he that winneth souls is wise."—Prov. 11:30.

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